

136 beds near the Islands where the bottom is sandy. The female scoops out a circular hole and deposits the eggs and the male then fertilises them and takes charge hanging over the nest and keeping away sediment by the action of the fin and tail till the young hatch out. This fanning motion keeps fresh water passing over the eggs.

It seems probable that the fish come up the Gulf to spawn and are then caught. A continuance of this year after year may be exterminating the Gulf fish. There is not any close season under the Ordinance. It is possible that the natives catch fry near to the shore under the impression that they are full-grown fish of a small type.

It will be noted that there is a certain amount of divergence of opinion as to where the fish spawn. My authority for stating that they do not spawn in the Gulf is Mr. Orloff, ex-Government Assistant Surgeon, who is a local authority on Lake Victoria fish.

DECLINE OF INDUSTRY: DIMINISHING CATCHES.

228 There appears to be no doubt whatever that fish taken in the
433 Lake are decreasing and various reasons have been brought forward to account for this. Mr. Acton, Superintendent of Inland Revenue and Conservancy, dealt with this in his annual report for 1923 and the figures he gave are of interest and worth quoting:

Year.	Sum collected for licences.	Average retail price of fish.
	Shs.	Cents.
1917-18	16,850	60
1918-19	14,530	70 to Shs. 1/-
1919-20	19,850	50 to 75
1920-21	19,200	50
1921 (9 months) ...	16,300	40 to 25
1922	9,900	25
1923	8,120	25

The following are the corresponding figures for the subsequent years:

1924	8,700
1925	10,500
1926	8,250
1927 to 31/3/27 ...	5,700

He states as follows: " During 1923 the fishermen appeared to have great difficulty in paying the annual licence of Shs. 800/- and although given a good deal of time in which to pay most of them had to be summoned to force payment.

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schooling of wives, but modern young women sometimes rebel against this ordered régime, choosing rather to do as they please in their new homes.

Since the introduction of the plough, the part played by men in the cultivation of the fields has greatly increased. Clearing and ploughing are now done by men, but planting and harvesting are still carried on largely by women.

Women's organizations. In the past, women's activities were limited in number. Apart from the communal dancing parties in which they took a great pride, there existed among certain related families councils to settle disputes and misconduct among women. This communal organization has tended to become weaker with the growing family individuality introduced by modern conditions.

While Christian influence has increased their freedom by releasing women from tribal prejudice and by widening the horizon of men's views, pagan women are still hampered from taking an active part in modern economic and social activities.

Women's organizations range from small religious groups to registered co-operative societies. The management of the co-operative societies is largely in the hands of Christian women. They are thus more progressive than their pagan neighbours, although the gap is rapidly narrowing owing to the influence exercised by Christian women upon the other women in the community.

The changing economy. Before the introduction of a money economy, the garden formed the basis of the economic life of women. Their transactions depended on garden produce which they bartered in exchange for live animals. The more industrious and economical thus acquired considerable wealth, supplementing garden

[Text continues on p.55]

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economy by handicrafts and exchanging pots and baskets for corn.

The introduction of modern household goods of a more durable nature has lessened women's chances of earning money through weaving baskets or making pots. The overcrowding of land has also meant an increased economic dependence on men. To satisfy family demands, most women engage in some kind of business transaction which often keeps them out of the home from morning till late in the evening. Although motor transport has improved these conditions, children have been unfavourably affected through neglect during the mother's prolonged absence. This change from sedentary occupation to long-distance travel has taken place since the coming of new economic standards, and at the moment it is very rare to find a woman who does not trade in a small way.

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WOMEN AND THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN

Customs and taboos. The customs and taboos observed by expectant mothers merely reflect the social attitude of Luo women to the birth of their children. Thus the aims of the customs and taboos can only be appreciated in the light of a social desire for the woman to give birth without difficulty. Fundamentally this is also a basis for the disapproval of the birth of twins, and also of abnormal deliveries.

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Concerning the persistence of the marital relationship during pregnancy there is no generally accepted restriction. But while custom varies from person to person, any sexual relationship continuing after the sixth month of pregnancy is regarded as excessive. The only social stigma attached to sexual relationship continued for the greater part of this period, is that it may provoke an open rebuke from the midwives or other women. Thus while no hard

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[Text continues on p. 57]

A NEW EARTH

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241 resistance to the forward march of Progress in the agricultural field. No spontaneous wish for any branch of Progress except the political seems to have gripped the collective Luo mind. Here, on these hot and apathetic lakeland flats, all the impetus has come from Europeans.

It might be argued that the Government has no call to make people change their ways against their will. This indeed is an argument much used by Luo politicians. It is an old story: should nanny sit by and watch Master Robert break up his toys—in this case, ruin the soil, create acute erosion, turn the whole of Nyanza province, which contains one-third of Kenya's population, into a great rural slum?

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233 Beyond question, that was going on. In Nyanza province there are over two million cattle, about one to every two acres. It would be a job to support this rate of stocking on the finest pastures under skilled management; here it is utterly impossible. The cattle have become so small and shrivelled that they are really not much larger than Great Danes, but their sharp hoofs can still make and deepen gullies as they track a way to springs. During the last three years, the output of crops in the province has halved, because yields have dropped so sharply. Yet there are more and more mouths to feed.

• [433] All the evils of land abuse were here displayed in concentrated form. No manure, no rotations, no resting land under grass; maize or cotton again and again, planted too late and in the wrong manner; no trees, communal grazing destroyed by useless skinny little beasts. It was not for want of trying by the technical staff. For years they had been urging, persuading, bullying, demonstrating, and they had scarcely dented Luo indifference and complacency. Famine was beginning to threaten these overcrowded areas—for the one thing the people continued to produce more and more of was their own kind.

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II

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177 And so the Government decided that the only salvation for the Luo lay in dividing their communally owned land into individual holdings. Land consolidation—the first stage

THE RELUCTANT LUO

towards enclosure—was proclaimed as the official policy and, in 1958, an area called Nyabondo picked out for an experiment. The edict went forth that everyone must define his holdings, mark them out and do, in fact, as the Kikuyu were doing with such success, not to mention the Nandi and Kipsigis and many others. 648
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On the heels of the agriculturists with propaganda, local politicians moved in to tell the people it was all a trick to steal their land. Whether or no everyone believed this, no one dared to quarrel openly with the politicians, and not a single land-holder obeyed the Government.

'On 30th December, I called a meeting and closed the whole thing down,' Mr. Peter MacEntee, the D.C., told me. 'All right, I said, if you don't like it you needn't have it; ruin your land if you want to, as much as you like; what do we care? It's your funeral. Go ahead, and good luck to you. The agriculturists will leave you alone from now on, the instructors are pulling out to places where people want them; we understand now that this sort of thing is far too advanced for you. Keep up the bad work, and good-bye.'

Mr. MacEntee had evidently enjoyed this. In time the Luo, when in their mule-like frame of mind, subdue the greatest enthusiasts. But there was a sequel. [181]

Three weeks later, half a dozen men from Nyabondo turned up in my office. They had a little plan, with some *shamba* boundaries marked on it. "We have decided to consolidate," they said. "Here are the boundaries of the first *shamba* we've completed. We've marked out each man's fragments and exchanged them as you said. Now we want to lay them out on proper lines. Please send us an instructor and a European."

This was the first deputation. Others followed. Now the whole of Nyabondo is completed—the first in central Nyanza. We know what to do now. Use the couldn't-care-less technique.'

Another example: on the Kano plains, where rice grows under irrigation, until this year the agricultural department has looked after the bunds. They had endless trouble—arguments, sullen silences, even sabotage. They got the output up to 30,000 bags and there it stuck. Then they withdrew, 648
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telling the rice-growers they must make and maintain their own bunds. Last season the output jumped to 50,000 bags.

III

133 We drove to Nyabondo across the Kano plains. No one loves these plains. They are not only flat, they are absolutely treeless, dry, cracked, windswept, overcrowded, dusty and mean. The soil is 'black cotton', an especially viscous clay in which any vehicle bogs down irrevocably in wet weather—very fertile potentially, but soul-destroying to work. 'The people are like their soil,' I was told. 'They break your heart and yet you go on trying, something's there.'

137 Everywhere are circles of a particular euphorbia, a dark-green, harsh, ugly plant that grows about eight feet tall and surrounds every group of huts. When a family head dies, his homestead is evacuated, his huts are left to rot away and only the euphorbia hedge remains, so the plains are covered with old circles as well as those in use. People have tried planting eucalyptus trees, but white ants eat them before they are man-high.

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423 No individual cultivates his land in one piece. He digs or ploughs a patch here, a patch there, another bit over there, two more bits down the hill and a piece two miles off across the valley that belonged to his mother's uncle. This is known as fragmentation; it is almost universal among Bantu people, exists also among others such as the Luo, and is like a net spread for the feet of Progress in which he becomes enmeshed and stultified.

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578 The first stage of land enclosure must be for every cultivator to exchange fragments with his neighbours, so that all his land is gathered together in one piece. It is the first stage and also the hardest, *don't be like the people; it is like* exhorting men to exchange their blood, or their children. Suspensions dart out of their holes like bee-eaters. Won't so-and-so, my neighbour, get an unfair share? The bit he wants to swap for my piece is smaller. Give up my fertile patch by the river where bananas flourish for that barren stretch of hillside? Never! Somewhere there is a trick in all this. . . .